

# Zen & the Art of the Visitor Census





# Agenda

1. What is a visitor census?
2. Developing a methodology
3. Making it happen
4. Forecasting activity
5. Questions and Discussion





# What is a visitor census?

A count and survey of visitors!

- Number of visitors
- Visitor demographics
- Visitor preferences


# Developing a Methodology

Develop methodology *at least* two months before census

- Where to conduct census?
- When to conduct the census?
- Who is going to conduct the census?
- What do you want to know about visitors?



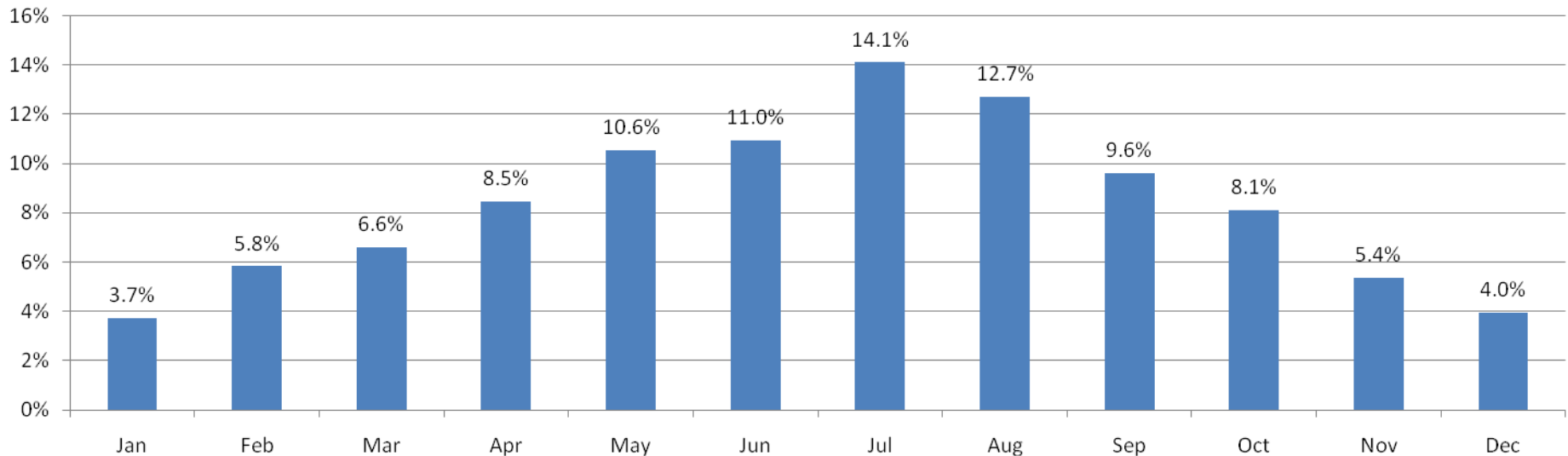
# Developing a Methodology: Where to conduct your census?

- 
- A photograph of a paved trail with people cycling and walking a dog, overlaid with a semi-transparent text box. The trail is surrounded by greenery and trees. In the foreground, a man in a blue helmet and white tank top is cycling towards the camera. Behind him, a woman in a blue helmet and black shirt is also cycling. Further back, a man is walking a large brown dog, and another person is cycling in the distance.
- Most representative sites
  - Suitable for survey

- Is it feasible to staff every entrance?
- Do you want to know about internal trail activity?
- Do your selected sites reflect your system?

# Developing a Methodology: When to conduct your census?

- Ideally 4 times over a year
  - January
  - May
  - July
  - September
- Peak time of year
  - July



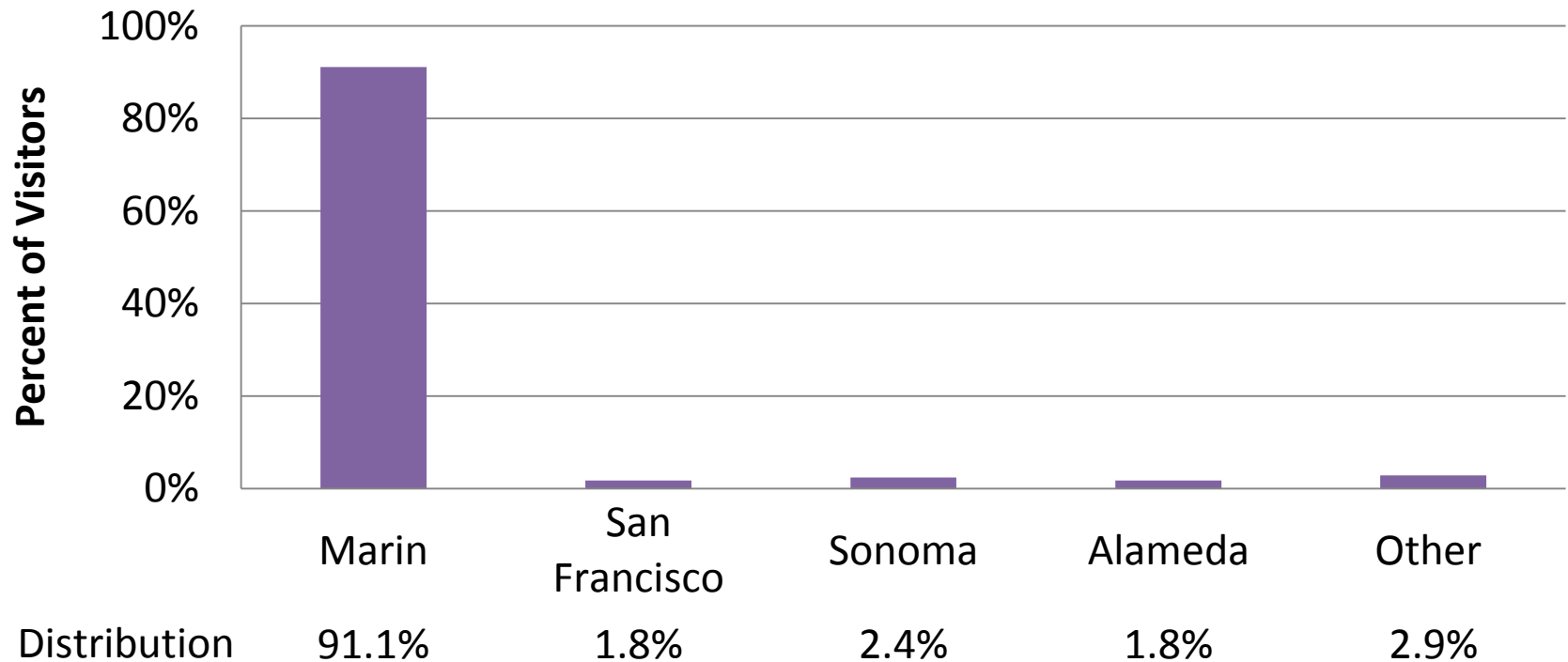
# Developing a Methodology:

## Who will conduct your census?

- Volunteers?
  - Do you have a large dedicated volunteer base?
  - Use caution when recruiting students!
- Staff?
  - Do you have budget to use staff?
- Consultants?
  - Planning firms
  - Traffic count firms

# Developing a Methodology: What do you want to know about visitors?

- Demographics
  - Gender/age/ethnicity
  - Where do they live? Are they within your jurisdiction?

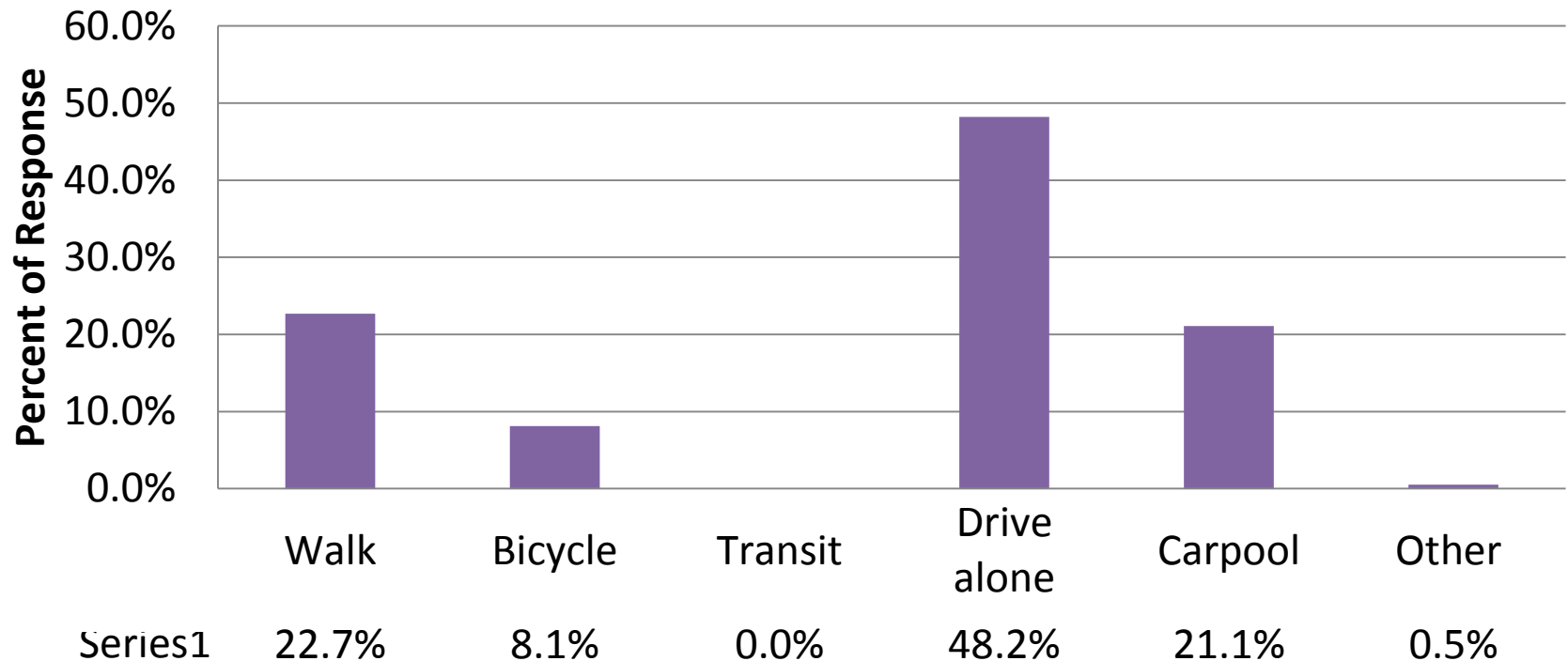




# Developing a Methodology:

## What do you want to know about visitors?

- How did they arrive?
  - Car, carpool, bike, walk, transit?
  - Can you also conduct a parking inventory?

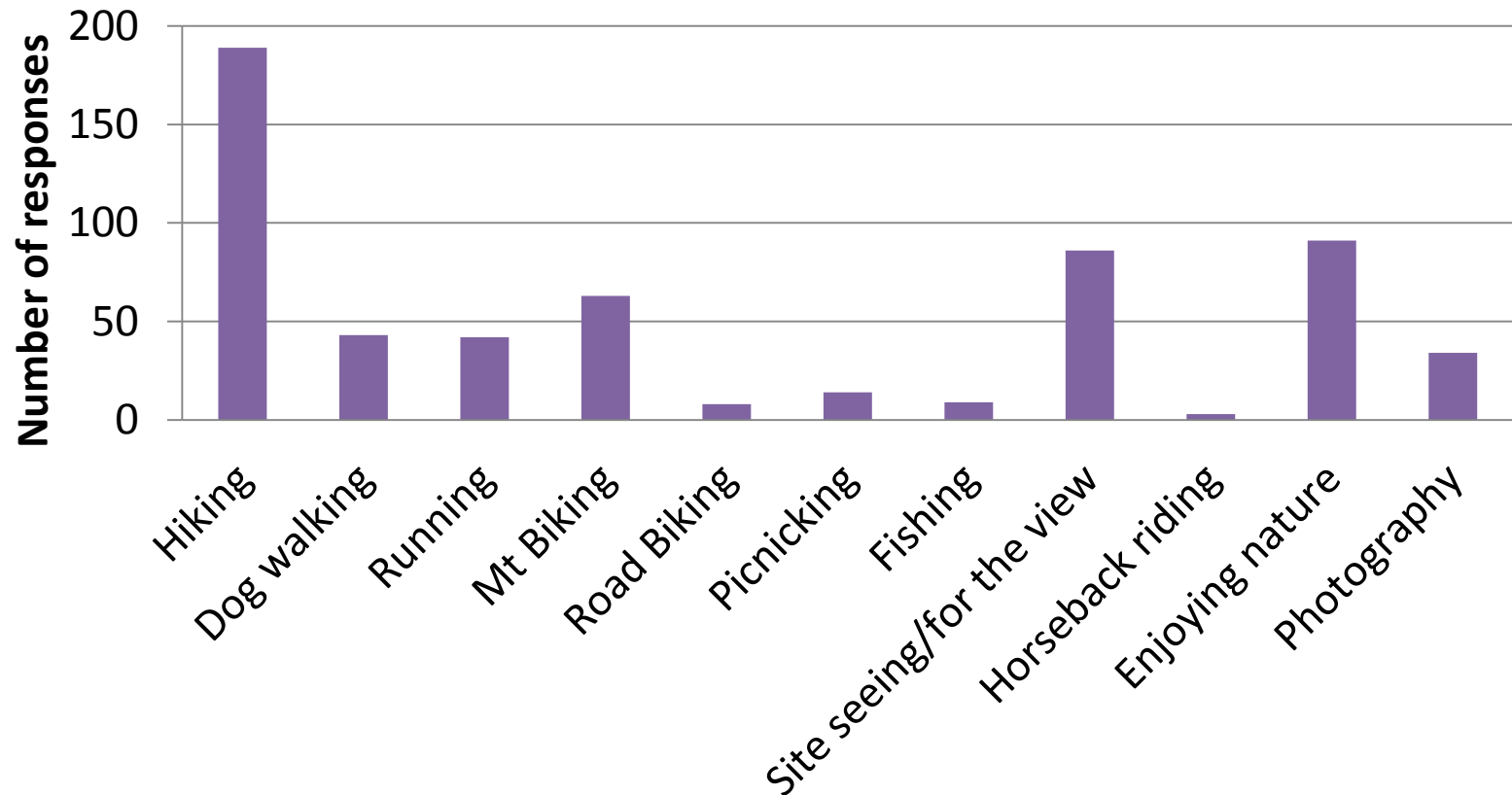


# Developing a Methodology:

## What do you want to know about visitors?

What is the primary purpose of the visit?

Walk, jog, dog walking, picnic, fishing, horseback riding, enjoy nature, photography, etc.

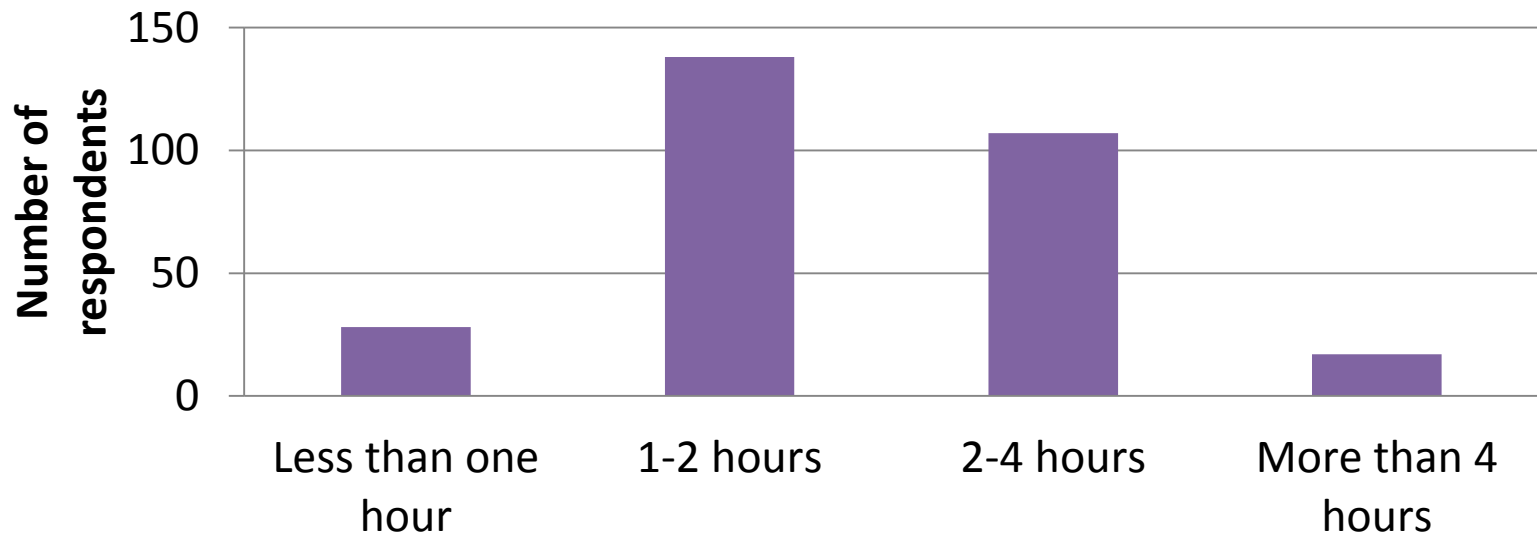




# Developing a Methodology:

## What do you want to know about visitors?

Length of this visit



# Developing a Methodology:

## What do you want to know about visitors?

### How often do they visit?

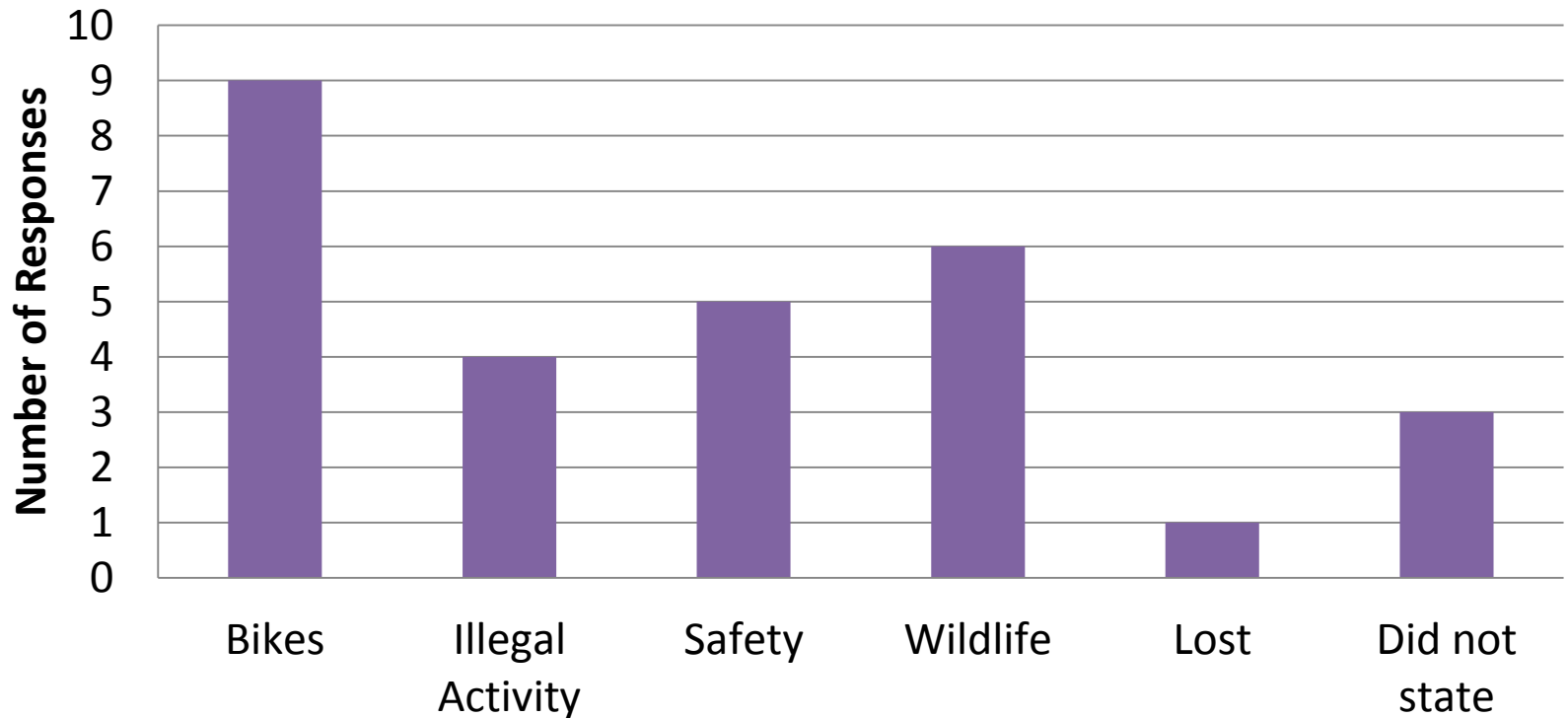
Answer	Answer Detail	Count	%
First time visitor		22	7.4%
Less than once a month	(Less than once a month, a couple times a year)	31	10.4%
A few times a month	(1-3 times a month)	79	26.5%
A dozen times a month	(2-3 times a week)	110	36.9%
Almost every day of the month	(6 days a week)	48	16.1%
Other		19	6.4%
No Answer		10	3.4%
Total		319	



# Developing a Methodology:

## What do you want to know about visitors?

- Safety – work with Rangers to develop questions
  - Feel safe? Or How often do they see rangers or staff?
  - If there are safety concerns, what are they?



# Visitor Concerns

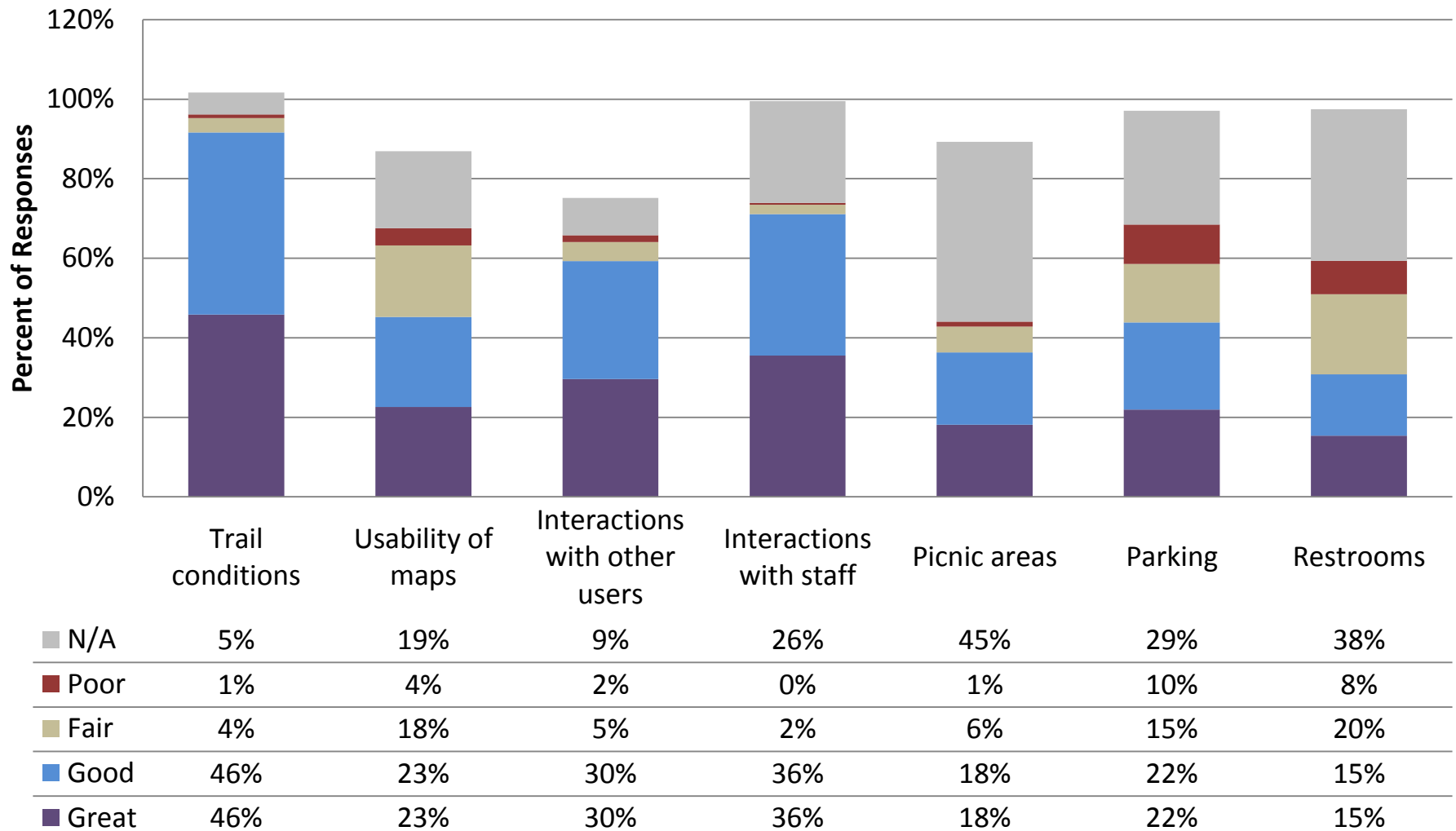
Provide an opened ended response question and visitors will tell you about concerns.

Common concerns include:

- Dog/horse waste
- Concern about off-leash dogs
- Requests for designated off-leash dog areas
- Requests for wayfinding



# Overall Visit Experience



# Making it happen

- 2 months before census
  - 8 week countdown: Finalize methodology
  - 6 week countdown: Recruit volunteers/find staff/contract with firm
- 1 month before census
  - 4 week countdown:
    - Print surveys/post survey online
    - Print count forms and accompanying maps
    - Print instructions
  - 2 week countdown
    - Train volunteers/staff
    - Distribute materials at training



# Forecasting Activity

[www.bikepeddocumentation.org](http://www.bikepeddocumentation.org)

<div> <div> Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Developer Acrobat </div> <div> <div> Normal Page Layout Page Break Preview Custom Views Full Screen </div> <div> Ruler Gridlines Message Bar </div> <div> Formula Bar Headings Show/Hide </div> <div> Zoom 100% Zoom to Selection Zoom </div> <div> New Window Arrange All Freeze Panes Split Hide Unhide </div> </div> </div> <div> D25 fx Long Winter Short Summer </div>						
1	A	B	C	D	E	F
18						
19			Inputs - Green cells require your attention.			
20						
21			Input your two-hour count total	20		
22			Count date	9/21/2010		
23			Count time: Enter first hour of two hour count period	10:00 AM		
24			Type: Path or PED District	Path		
25			Climate Zone: Long Winter Short Summer, Moderate Climate, or Very Hot Summer Mild Winter	Long Winter Short Summer		
26						
27		Multiplier Value	Outputs - Orange cells are the daily, weekly, monthly and annual estimates.			
28						
29		1.05	1 hour period multiplied by 1.05	21.00		

Instructions
Worksheet (2 hour)

Ready

# Forecasting Activity

- 34 open space preserves and parks

Period	Estimated Activity (Range)	
Weekly Activity	38,100	70,100
Monthly Activity (September)	169,000	301,000
Annual Activity	2,820,000	3,760,000



# Making it a Zen Experience

- Plan ahead – *at least* 2 months before
- Counts – Be realistic about using volunteers
  - If you don't have a large *active* volunteer base, use staff or hire a firm
- Surveys - Work with staff & rangers to brainstorm questions

# Questions?



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